

Dear Representative,

I am the Lutheran lay minister [akin to a Deacon] who has had the pleasure of meeting / speaking to some of you in the past few years about my concerns about global warming, energy policy, and renewable energy sources.

I am writing you now both as a Michigan citizen and someone called (in my ministry position sense) to advocate for policies that care for God's creation and improve the health and well being of people. I have followed and been concerned about energy policies since about 1998, both at national and state levels.

Basically, here in Michigan, we have lagged far behind other states, that have already put in place strong RES standards and energy efficiency programs. In other states that have adopted a strong RES, new businesses have followed, and as a result there have been energy cost savings and increased job opportunities in the kind of 21st century, cleaner, energy technologies that would so benefit our state - both economically AND ecologically.

It's time to put this vision out there ... by setting a Renewable Energy Standard of at least 10% by 2015. I have heard some concerns about "mandates." I would contend that this is the wrong attitude to have about this. Voluntary measures will make little difference, and certainly not provide the stepped-up energy policy response we really ought to be making. Also, I see it not so much as a "mandate" as a way to hold out a hopeful and inspiring VISION for how we can improve the quality of life for our residents, and perhaps even more importantly, for our children and their children.

I often see where we are today (in light of the reality of global climate change) as our modern "Deuteronomy 30:19 moment" ... if you recall your Old Testament scriptures .. that is where God, speaking through Moses, is saying to the people "Listen, I call heaven and earth to witness against you this day, that I have set before life or death, blessing or curse .. therefore choose life, that you and your descendants may live."

We have some key, crossroad kind of choices before us, in terms of ecological (and also social, economic) decisions about how we use energy. You will hear, on Wednesday, the testimony of a number folks (including some of my colleagues in the religious community) about all of the positive ramifications of adopting a strong (at least 10%) RES.

I urge you to please step up to help champion this vision! Thank you,

Kim Winchell - Freeland
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*"Organizational title for informational purposes only;
this letter is not a formal position of the North / West Lower Michigan Synod of the ELCA.*